

WNTC Prospects For Free Air Not Very Bright

by Rich Klemm

In light of the existing legal problems barring the incorporation of the Inter College Radio Network, its president Bill Thornton stated this week that 'at the present time, prospects for the incorporation are not very bright.' But he added that 'the possibility has not been eliminated.'

In recent weeks the ICRN members have sought to incorporate as a 'not for profit' organization in hopes that the network's chances for obtaining a FCC-radiating radio license would be greatly enhanced.

The station in the midst of the dispute is WNTC which currently broadcasts via carrier-current to the Clarkson and State campuses. Thornton explained that the carrier-current method feeds the radio signal through the power lines leading to the dorms on both campuses. To receive the signal a radio must be plugged into an electrical outlet, or placed very near to such an outlet.

Bill stressed that the advantages of operating by the free-radiating method, as do the larger commercial stations, would be the wider and better reception out-in-town and in the neighboring community on the AM dial than is presently possible.

He added that a 'substantial amount of revenue could be collected from advertising,' enough to cover all operating costs.

But, as Thornton pointed out, to incorporate at his time would certainly be weighed heavily with disadvantages: there are regulations in both the Clarkson and State student governments that prohibit them from recognizing or funding an independent corporation.

Presently all the technical equipment of WNTC is jointly owned by the two student governments and would be removed upon ICRN incorporation. Also, Clarkson's Dean, A. George Davis notified Thornton that following any incorporation, the WNTC station must vacate their present building located on the downtown campus.

As Thornton explained, 'If ICRN were to incorporate now, the radio station would have to start from scratch. All new equipment would have to be purchased as well as locating and renting a new building.' These initial outlays for a new transmitter and signal tower would greatly hinder the economic stability of a newly-founded station.

Currently, the ICRN, in conjunction with both the State and Clarkson student governments, is investigating alternative avenues of obtaining the free-radiating license for WNTC. Under consideration is the selection of an organization or a board of trustees to hold the FCC license. This idea holds much merit because in Potsdam a precedent has been established by the Clarkson Board of Trustees, who currently hold a license for WTSC-FM.